



**STATE OF ARKANSAS
ASA HUTCHINSON, GOVERNOR**

Arkansas Women's Commission
Chair: Alison Williams, Chief of Staff to the Governor
Meeting #2 Fayetteville, Arkansas
March 15, 2022

Attendees In Person: Alison Williams, Apprilla Porch, Maddie Spickard, Gayatri Agnew, Senator Breanne Davis, Tamika Edwards, J.D, Heather Larkin, Dr. Kathy White Loyd, Beverly Morrow, Dr. Todd Shields

Virtual Attendees: Mellie Bridewell, Dr. Charisse Childers, Senator Joyce Elliott, Marie Holder, Dr. Cherisse Jones-Branch, Dr. Verónikha Salazar, Kathy Webb

MINUTES

- The Chair called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m.
- The Chair opened the meeting by welcoming the Commissioners and Visitors and mentioning that meetings are being live streamed on YouTube and archived on our website.
- The Chair thanked Commissioner Dr. Todd Shields, Dean of the Fulbright College of Arts and Sciences at the University of Arkansas, for hosting the meeting a member of the Commission and also thanked Bill Schwab, Executive Director of the David and Barbara Pryor Center for Arkansas Oral and Visual History, and his staff for making the meeting possible.
- Commissioner Naija White was unable to join because of a school conflict. The Chair noted she will ensure that this doesn't happen again.

Old Business

1. Commissioner Agnew moved to adopt the minutes from the February 22, 2022, meeting. Commissioner Edwards seconded.
 - Without Objection, the minutes from the February 22 meeting were adopted.
2. Commissioner Agnew moved to adopt the number and purposes of the Commission's subcommittees. Commissioner Webb seconded. The Chair opened up Discussion on this matter.
 - Discussion around the wording of the Subcommittees
 - Commissioner Edwards appreciated the wording of the committee descriptions. She thought that the wording captured the correct language without being too broad.

- Commissioner Agnew wanted to discuss the intersectional approach to how we are looking through these lenses. Specifically, Elder and Child Care. She wanted to make sure that was the lens through which we are looking.
- Commentary on highlighting mental health and the impacts of Covid-19. There was talk about health broadly but specifically calling out mental health. Chair would like to amend the Impacts of Covid-19 to be include a specific reference to mental health. It was included.
- Childcare focus and whether childcare is broad enough to cover the things that we are anticipating out there in our conversations. Should the committee objective be worded differently or remain the same?
- Commissioner Agnew wanted to make sure that under the “umbrella” of family care that childcare is addressed specifically.
- Commissioner Elliott wanted to know when we get into the research phase, where it is obvious that we really need to rethink the wording of something, will there be a process for our doing that? Chair acknowledged the possible need for reviewing subcommittees’ purposes and had no concerns with that.
- Commissioner Edwards expressed that other groups may take up this work. She wants the groups to be very specific about what the intentions are for others to see.
- Chair wanted to discuss the Labor Force Barriers to Entry Subcommittee. Chair wanted to know if there were any concerns at this time. This subcommittee gets to the STEM and Entrepreneur aspects of the executive order. It also gets to some of the K-12 education concerns. This is where the Commission will see the barriers to the workforce.
- Commissioner Agnew stated that she didn’t think the word “retention” was in the description. Encouraged that labor force entry and retention be included in the objective. It was added.

3. Subcommittee Chairpersonships

- The Chair asked for volunteers to lead the subcommittees.
- Commissioners were reminded that when they joined the commission, they were asked to join at least one subcommittee.
- Volunteers to chair subcommittees
 - Dr. Kathy White Loyd – Labor Force Participation and Barriers to Entry and Retention
 - Gayatri Agnew – Family Caregiving
 - Dr. Cherisse Jones Branch and Dr. Todd Shields (Co-Chairs) – Research and Writing
 - Mellie Bridewell – Impacts of Covid-19
 - The Chair offered to send an electronic sign-up for Commissioners to select their desired committee.
- The Chair asked for a vote on the Subcommittee names and Co-Chairs. Ayes had it.

4. Commissioner Morrow moved to accept the proposed meeting schedule. Commissioner Jones-Branch seconded.
- No conflicts noted
 - The Chair asked for a vote on the meeting schedule. Ayes had it.
 - The Chair asked for volunteers to host regional meetings.
 - Dr. White Loyd suggested Mountain Home at the community college in June.
 - Senator Breanne Davis suggested hosting at Russellville.
 - Dr. Jones Branch suggested hosting at Arkansas State in September the 14th.
 - Senator Elliott proposed having a meeting at SAU in Magnolia.
 - Gayatri Agnew proposed having a meeting in Bentonville.
 - The Chair will work with hosts to determine times of future meetings. She noted that middle of the day meetings will work best.

New Business

5. Focus Group Portion – This portion of the meeting was captured with audio only, and only themes were captured.
- Marshallese community is without representation.
 - Lack of networking/mentorship
 - As a woman, often the only women in a room full of men charged with leading change. Without networking/mentorship, our voice will never be heard.
 - Access to physical/mental health
 - Wage gaps
 - Women unable to buy a house/investment without male representation
 - Maternity/Paternity Leave
 - Not enough leave given to women, especially in physical jobs. When they return to work prematurely, they are still given the same workload and expectations.
 - 0-3 years of age, pivotal age, no multigenerational development
 - No recognition of the economic impact women have on the economy.
 - Nourish retention
 - Cost of reeducating adults that want to step back into education to better themselves and be more marketable.
 - Low wage jobs are essential
 - Systemic issues
 - Education and the ability to choose a good school. Not everyone has the option.
 - Women building capital

The meeting adjourned at 2:35 p.m.